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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [GM](#) [UZ](#)  
SUBJECT: DEUTSHCE WELLE REPORTERS AMNESTIED?

REF: A. TASHKENT 1095

[1](#)B. TASHKENT 792

Classified By: CDA BRAD HANSON FOR REASONS 1.4 (B, D).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Post reported on June 8 that the Tashkent General Prosecutor's Office dropped charges of working without a license against three Deutsche Welle correspondents. However, other sources announced that the three journalists were amnestied. A German Embassy representative insisted that the General Prosecutor's Office did not amnesty the journalists, but rather "suspended" its investigation. A document from the Prosecutor's Office warned the journalists that they can be prosecuted again if they persist in their activities. A fourth Deutsche Welle reporter who fled to Bishkek is wanted for evading a criminal investigation. Post cannot confirm the journalists' legal status, but the confusion probably suits the interests of the Government. End summary.

[1](#)2. (U) On June 11, the Russian news agency Interfax and Reporters Without Borders announced that three Deutsche Welle reporters--Yuri Chernogayev, Sayyora Rozikulova and Obid Shabanov--who had been charged with working without a license were amnestied. Post had reported (ref A) that charges against the reporters had been dropped. Interfax quoted a source in the General Prosecutor's Office as saying that the charges against the journalists were dropped before trial as the "criminal activities" of the journalists were covered by the amnesty passed by the Senate last November. (Note: On November 30, 2006, the Senate approved its annual amnesty, which applies to convicts, as well as those under investigation whose cases have not yet gone to trial. However, the amnesty period lasted only three months, ending March 1. An amnesty does not expunge a defendant's criminal record. End Note.) The source also said that evidence proved the three journalists were guilty and that they were provided an official warning. Reporters Without Borders said that the journalists were given a document reminding them of their obligations under the law. The organization also expressed concern that the authorities would keep the journalists under close surveillance and may try to renew prosecution against them.

[1](#)3. (C) In a conversation with Poloff on June 18, German Poloff Uwe Berndt insisted that the General Prosecutor's Office did not amnesty the three journalists, but rather had "suspended" its investigation without actually dropping charges entirely. He agreed that the decision was unusual. Berndt also said that he acquired a document from the General Prosecutor's Office warning the reporters that they could be prosecuted again if they continue to work without a license. (Note: This is presumably the same document that is referred

to in the press reports. End note.) The document does not mention amnesty. The document also states that a fourth Deutsche Welle journalist, Natalya Bushuyeva, who fled to Bishkek to seek asylum, is now wanted by the police for evading a criminal investigation (ref B). Berndt said the German Embassy will reach out to Bushuyeva in a month to see if she is interested in returning to Uzbekistan. If so, they are willing to make informal and formal requests of the Government on her behalf.

¶4. (C) Comment: Post cannot confirm whether the journalists have been amnestied, and their legal status remains unclear. The confusion is perhaps intentional, as it may suit the interests of the Government. Publicly, the Government can claim that the journalists are guilty of crimes, but at the same time it can tell the EU that it has stopped its investigation of the journalists as a gesture of "mercy." Either way, the Government retains the right to reinitiate the investigation at any time.

HANSON